

A family of fatty acid transport proteins (FATPs) mediate transport of long chain fatty acids (LCFAs) across cell membranes into cells. These proteins exhibit different expression patterns among the organs of mammals. Nucleic acids encoding FATPs of this family, vectors comprising these nucleic acids, as well as the production of FATP proteins in host cells are described. Also described are methods to test FATPs for fatty acid transport function, and methods to identify inhibitors or enhancers of transport function. The altering of LCFA uptake by administering to the mammal an inhibitor or enhancer of FATP transport function of a FATP in the small intestine can decrease or increase calories available as fats, and can decrease or increase circulating fatty acids. The organ specificity of FATP distribution can be exploited in methods to direct drugs, diagnostic indicators and so forth to an organ such as the heart.